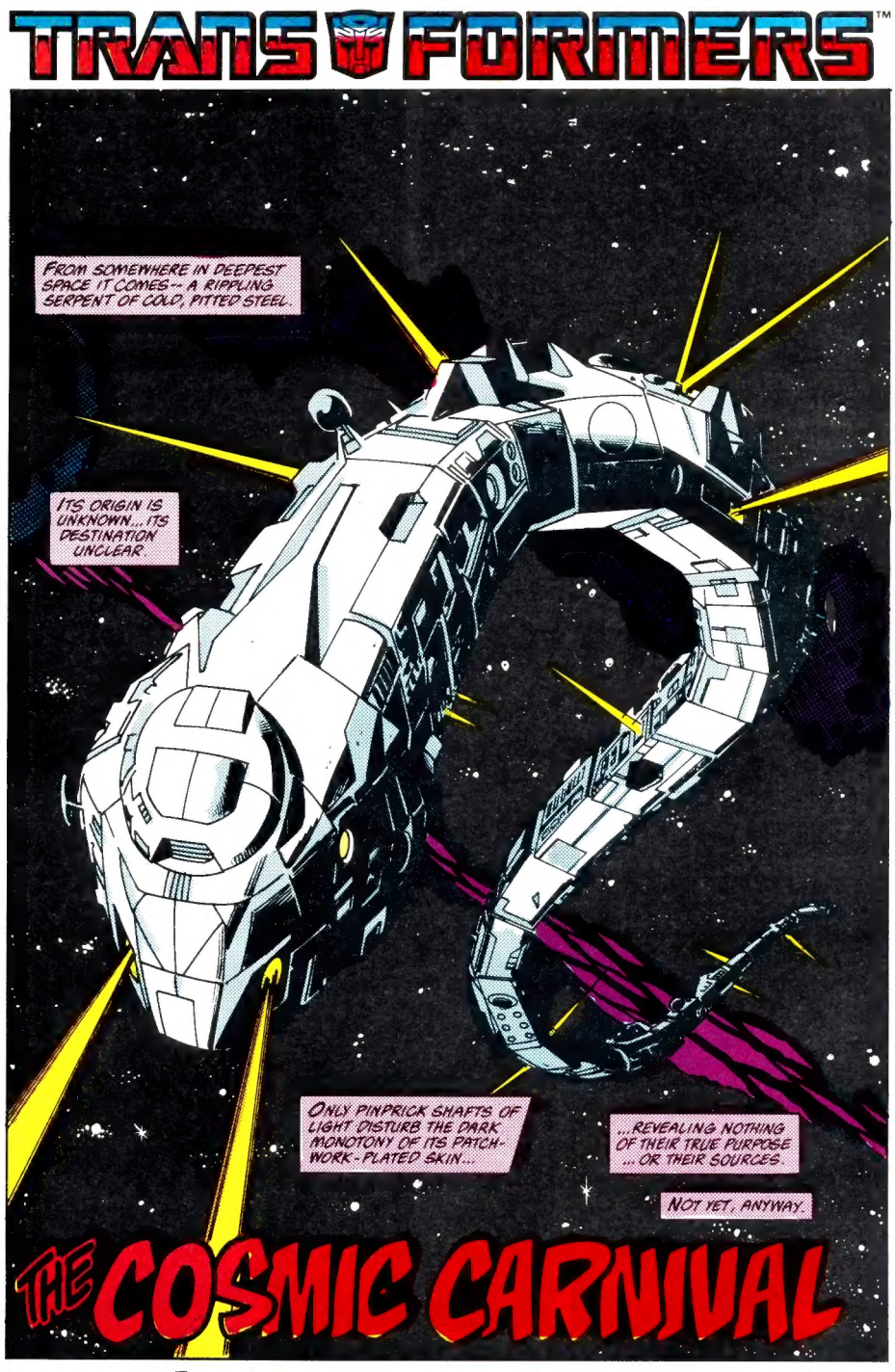
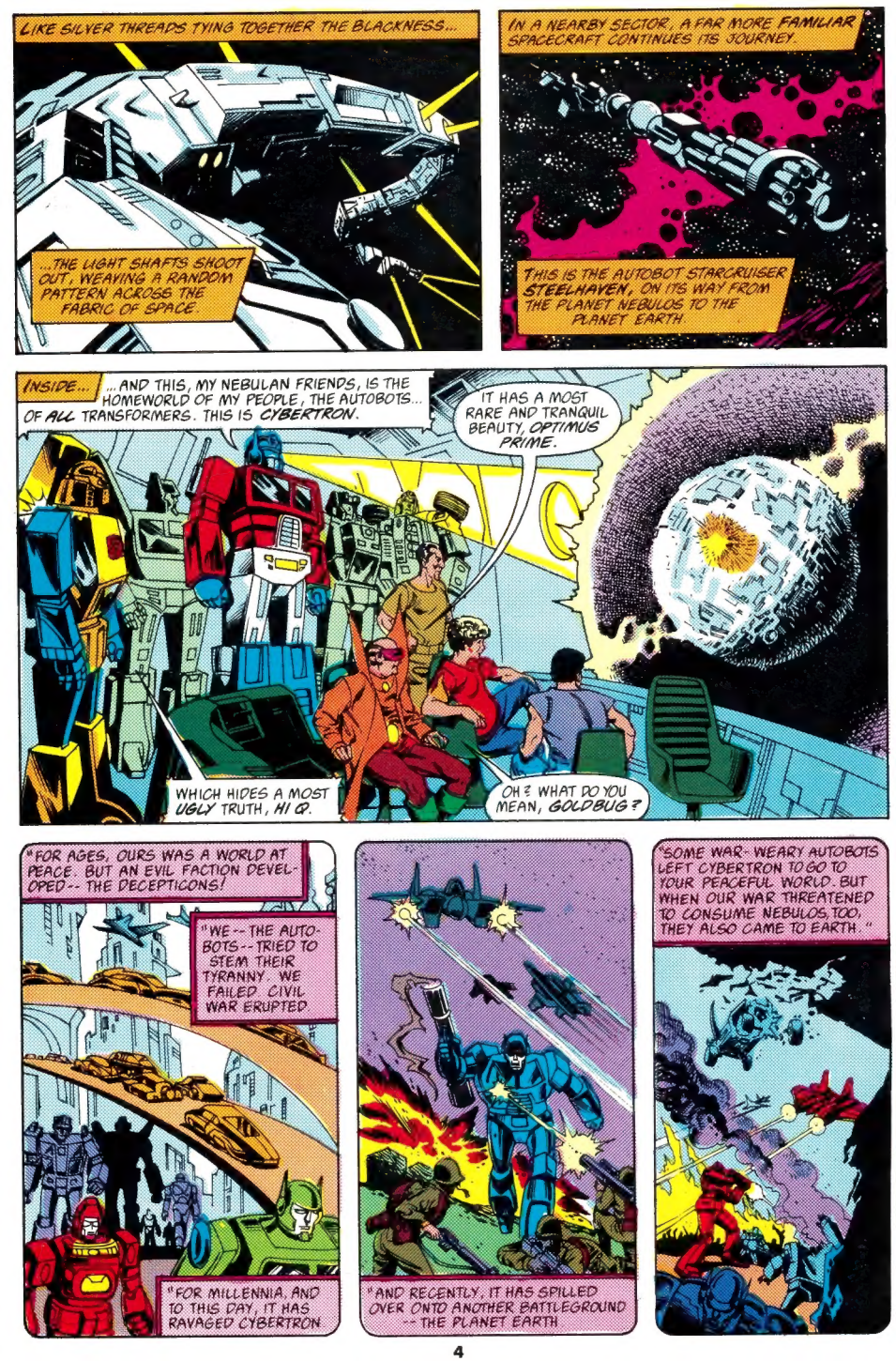
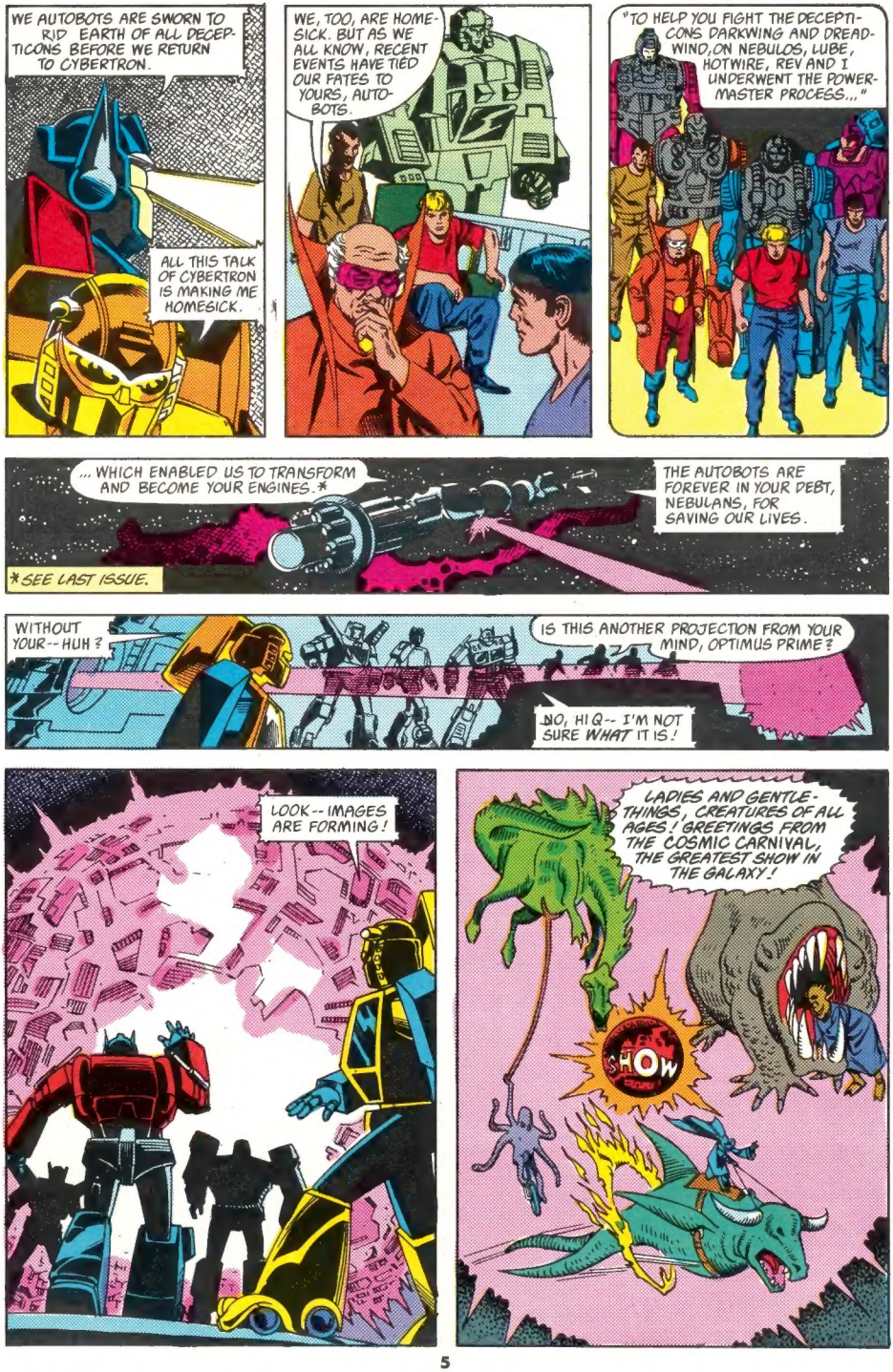
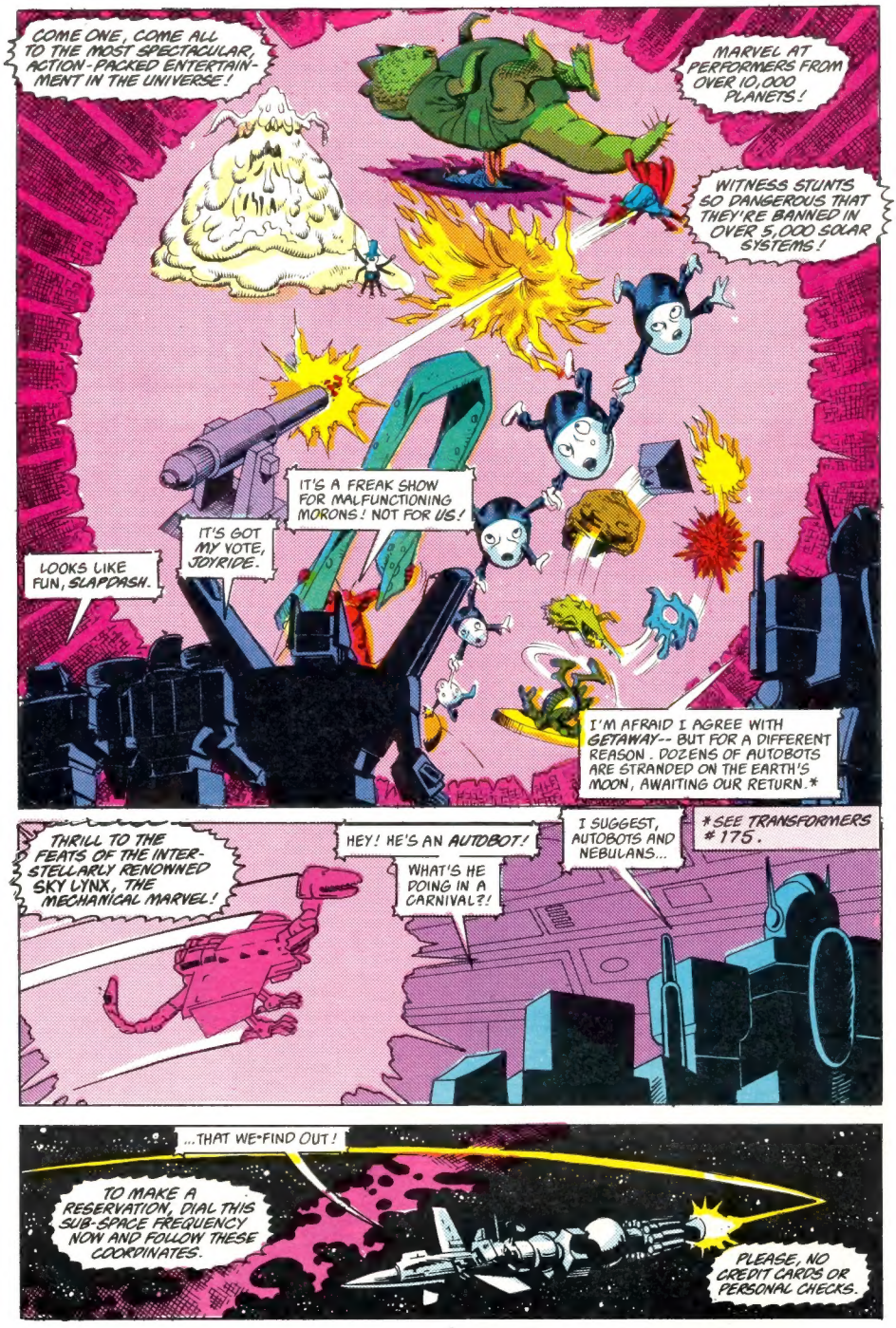
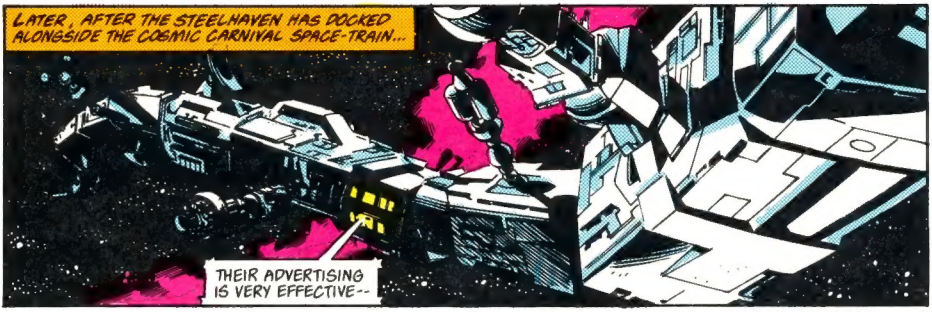
MARVEL®
OPTIMUS PRIME VIDEOS TO BE WON!
13th Aug.88
№178 35p
U.S.$1.45 CAN.$1.85
THE TRANSFORMERS™
and
ACTION FORCE™
ROLL UP! ROLL UP! FOR THE GREATEST SHOW...
...IN OUTER SPACE!

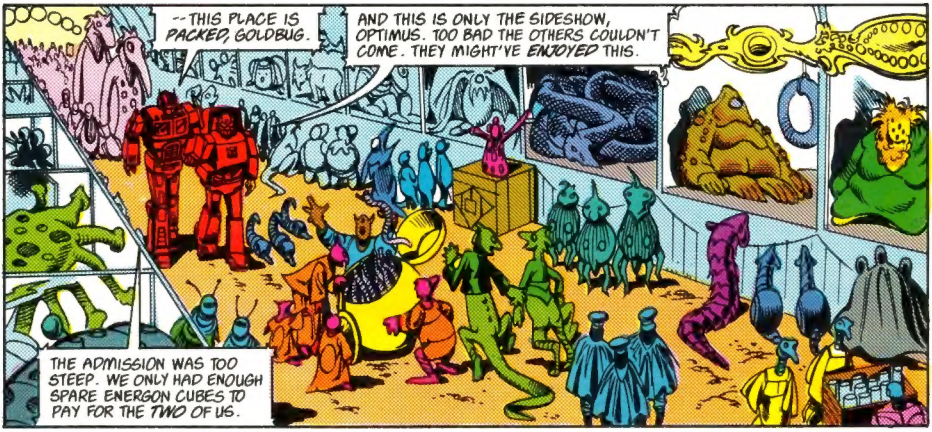

TRANSFORMERS™
FROM SOMEWHERE IN DEEPEST SPACE IT COMES -- A RIPPLING SERPENT OF COLD, PITTED STEEL.
ITS ORIGIN IS UNKNOWN... ITS DESTINATION UNCLEAR.
ONLY PINPRICK SHAFTS OF LIGHT DISTURB THE DARK MONOTONY OF ITS PATCH-WORK-PLATED SKIN...
...REVEALING NOTHING OF THEIR TRUE PURPOSE ... OR THEIR SOURCES.
NOT YET, ANYWAY.
THE COSMIC CARNIVAL


LIKE SILVER THREADS TYING TOGETHER THE BLACKNESS...
...THE LIGHT SHAFTS SHOOT OUT, WEAVING A RANDOM PATTERN ACROSS THE FABRIC OF SPACE.
IN A NEARBY SECTOR, A FAR MORE FAMILIAR SPACECRAFT CONTINUES ITS JOURNEY.
THIS IS THE AUTOBOT STARCRUISER STEELHAVEN, ON ITS WAY FROM THE PLANET NEBULOS TO THE PLANET EARTH.
INSIDE...
...AND THIS, MY NEBULAN FRIENDS, IS THE HOMEWORLD OF MY PEOPLE, THE AUTOBOTS... OF ALL TRANSFORMERS. THIS IS CYBERTRON.
IT HAS A MOST RARE AND TRANQUIL BEAUTY, OPTIMUS PRIME.
WHICH HIDES A MOST UGLY TRUTH, HI Q.
OH? WHAT DO YOU MEAN, GOLDBUG?
"FOR AGES, OURS WAS A WORLD AT PEACE. BUT AN EVIL FACTION DEVELOPED -- THE DECEPTICONS!
"WE -- THE AUTOBOTS -- TRIED TO STEM THEIR TYRANNY. WE FAILED. CIVIL WAR ERUPTED.
"FOR MILLENNIA, AND TO THIS DAY, IT HAS RAVAGED CYBERTRON.
"AND RECENTLY, IT HAS SPILLED OVER ONTO ANOTHER BATTLEGROUND -- THE PLANET EARTH.
"SOME WAR-WEARY AUTOBOTS LEFT CYBERTRON TO GO TO YOUR PEACEFUL WORLD. BUT WHEN OUR WAR THREATENED TO CONSUME NEBULOS, TOO, THEY ALSO CAME TO EARTH."

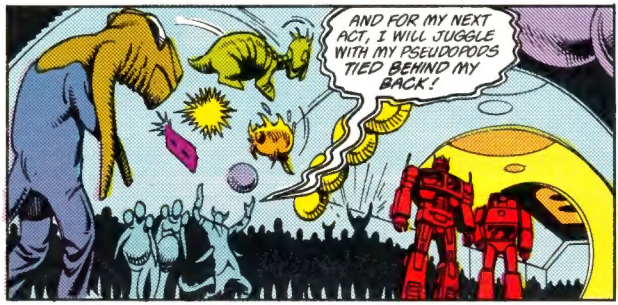

WE AUTOBOTS ARE SWORN TO RID EARTH OF ALL DECEPTICONS BEFORE WE RETURN TO CYBERTRON.
ALL THIS TALK OF CYBERTRON IS MAKING ME HOMESICK.
WE, TOO, ARE HOMESICK. BUT AS WE ALL KNOW, RECENT EVENTS HAVE TIED OUR FATES TO YOURS, AUTOBOTS.
"TO HELP YOU FIGHT THE DECEPTICONS DARKWING AND DREADWIND, ON NEBULOS, LUBE, HOTWIRE, REV AND I UNDERWENT THE POWER-MASTER PROCESS..."
... WHICH ENABLED US TO TRANSFORM AND BECOME YOUR ENGINES.*
THE AUTOBOTS ARE FOREVER IN YOUR DEBT, NEBULANS, FOR SAVING OUR LIVES.
*SEE LAST ISSUE.
WITHOUT YOUR-- HUH?
IS THIS ANOTHER PROJECTION FROM YOUR MIND, OPTIMUS PRIME?
NO, HIQ-- I'M NOT SURE WHAT IT IS!
LOOK-- IMAGES ARE FORMING!
LADIES AND GENTLETHINGS, CREATURES OF ALL AGES! GREETINGS FROM THE COSMIC CARNIVAL, THE GREATEST SHOW IN THE GALAXY!
SHOW


COME ONE, COME ALL TO THE MOST SPECTACULAR, ACTION-PACKED ENTERTAINMENT IN THE UNIVERSE!
MARVEL AT PERFORMERS FROM OVER 10,000 PLANETS!
WITNESS STUNTS SO DANGEROUS THAT THEY'RE BANNED IN OVER 5,000 SOLAR SYSTEMS!
IT'S A FREAK SHOW FOR MALFUNCTIONING MORONS! NOT FOR US!
IT'S GOT MY VOTE, JOYRIDE.
LOOKS LIKE FUN, SLAPDASH.
I'M AFRAID I AGREE WITH GETAWAY-- BUT FOR A DIFFERENT REASON. DOZENS OF AUTOBOTS ARE STRANDED ON THE EARTH'S MOON, AWAITING OUR RETURN.*
THRILL TO THE FEATS OF THE INTERSTELLARLY RENOWNED SKY LYNX, THE MECHANICAL MARVEL!
HEY! HE'S AN AUTOBOT!
WHAT'S HE DOING IN A CARNIVAL?!
I SUGGEST, AUTOBOTS AND NEBULANS...
*SEE TRANSFORMERS #175.
...THAT WE FIND OUT!
TO MAKE A RESERVATION, DIAL THIS SUB-SPACE FREQUENCY NOW AND FOLLOW THESE COORDINATES.
PLEASE, NO CREDIT CARDS OR PERSONAL CHECKS.

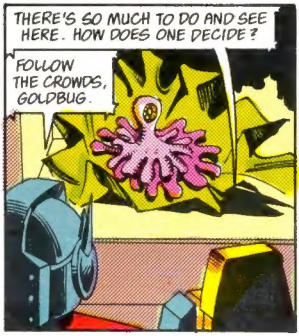

LATER, AFTER THE STEELHAVEN HAS DOCKED ALONGSIDE THE COSMIC CARNIVAL SPACE-TRAIN...
THEIR ADVERTISING IS VERY EFFECTIVE--


--THIS PLACE IS PACKED, GOLDBUG.
AND THIS IS ONLY THE SIDESHOW, OPTIMUS. TOO BAD THE OTHERS COULDN'T COME. THEY MIGHT'VE ENJOYED THIS.
THE ADMISSION WAS TOO STEEP. WE ONLY HAD ENOUGH SPARE ENERGON CUBES TO PAY FOR THE TWO OF US.

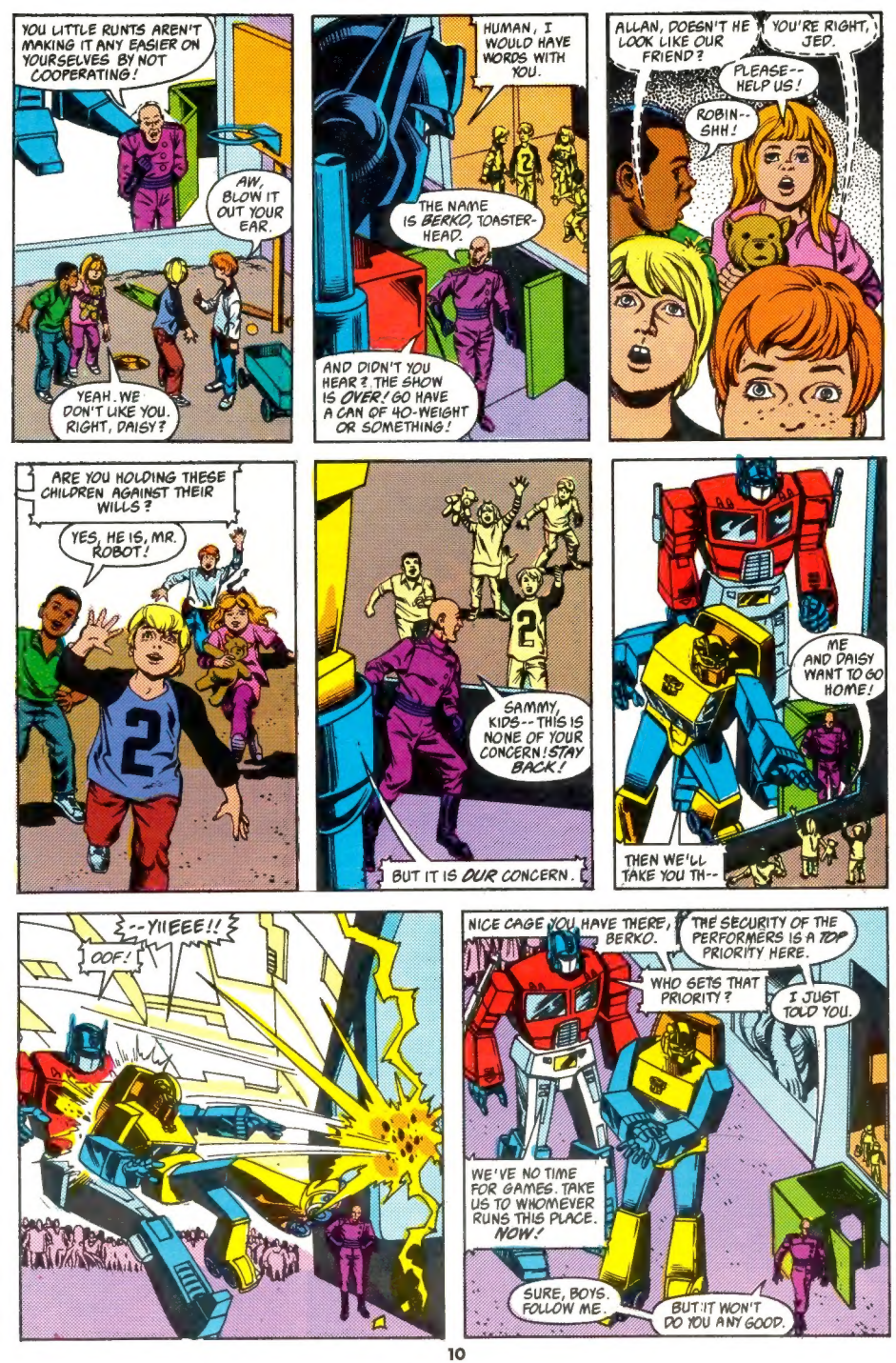
Haha! Isn't that the stupidest-looking creature, honeyslug?
Careful what you say, dear. The children are so impressionable.


AND FOR MY NEXT ACT, I WILL JUGGLE WITH MY PSEUDOPODS TIED BEHIND MY BACK!

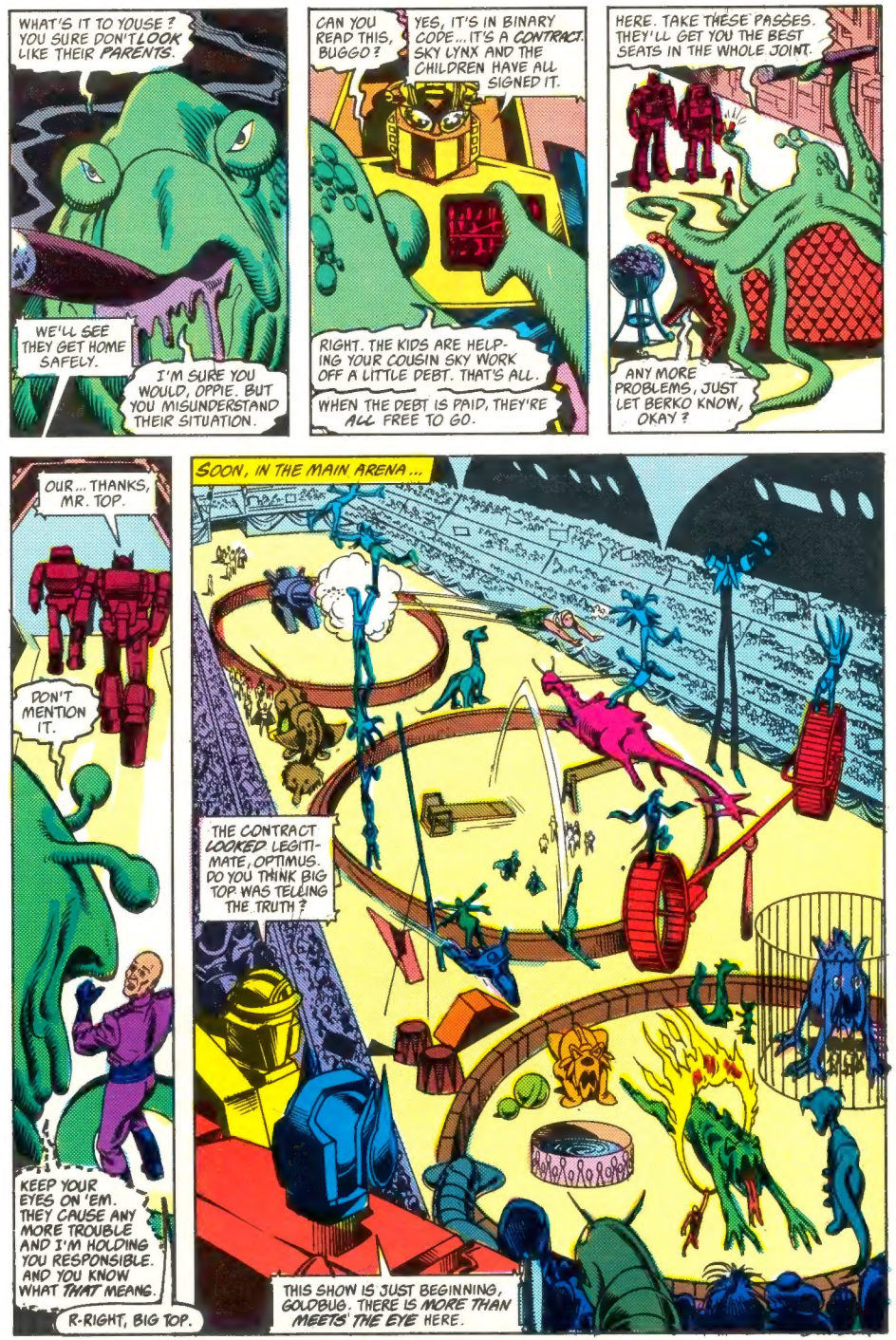
NO, SON! THAT STUFF'LL ROT YOUR FANGS!


THERE'S SO MUCH TO DO AND SEE HERE. HOW DOES ONE DECIDE?
FOLLOW THE CROWDS, GOLDBUG.

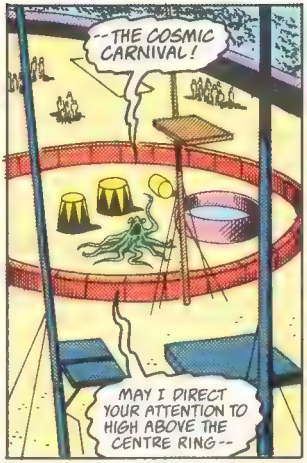
THERE, FOR INSTANCE.
STEP RIGHT UP, FOLKS!
ISN'T THAT A HUMAN?
I THINK YOU'RE RIGHT.
SEE THE MOST ASTONISHING, AMAZING, AMUSING ALIEN ANIMALS EVER TO AROUSE YOUR IMAGINATION!
HEY, IRONPANTS-- NO PUSHING!
BY THE PRIME MATRIX ITSELF!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT EITHER--
--EARTH CHILDREN!
DOWN IN FRONT!
HEY, KIDS! THIS CROWD IS PAYING GOOD MONEY TO SEE YOU DO YOUR TRICKS!
SO DO SOMETHING!
I'LL DO SOMETHING--
--ON YOUR FACE!
KRAK
OH!
MY, MY-- VIOLENCE!
ER, SORRY, LADIES AND GENTLETHINGS -- THEY ALWAYS GET LIKE THIS CLOSE TO FEEDING TIME!
COME BACK LATER!

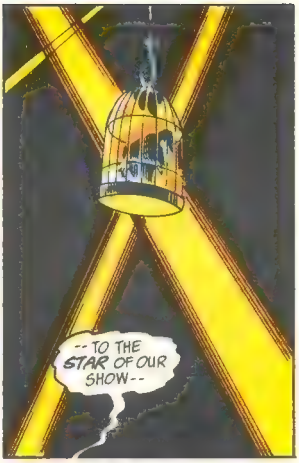

YOU LITTLE RUNTS AREN'T MAKING IT ANY EASIER ON YOURSELVES BY NOT COOPERATING!
AW, BLOW IT OUT YOUR EAR.
YEAH. WE DON'T LIKE YOU. RIGHT, DAISY?
HUMAN, I WOULD HAVE WORDS WITH YOU.
THE NAME IS BERKO, TOASTER-HEAD.
AND DIDN'T YOU HEAR? THE SHOW IS OVER! GO HAVE A CAN OF 40-WEIGHT OR SOMETHING!
ALLAN, DOESN'T HE LOOK LIKE OUR FRIEND?
YOU'RE RIGHT, JED.
PLEASE-- HELP US!
ROBIN-- SHH!
ARE YOU HOLDING THESE CHILDREN AGAINST THEIR WILLS?
YES, HE IS, MR. ROBOT!
SAMMY, KIDS-- THIS IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN! STAY BACK!
BUT IT IS OUR CONCERN.
ME AND DAISY WANT TO GO HOME!
THEN WE'LL TAKE YOU TH--
--YIIEEE!!
OOF!
NICE CAGE YOU HAVE THERE, BERKO.
THE SECURITY OF THE PERFORMERS IS A TOP PRIORITY HERE.
WHO GETS THAT PRIORITY?
I JUST TOLD YOU.
WE'VE NO TIME FOR GAMES. TAKE US TO WHOMEVER RUNS THIS PLACE. NOW!
SURE, BOYS. FOLLOW ME.
BUT IT WON'T DO YOU ANY GOOD.

IT'S OKAY, OLLIE. MR. BIG TOP IS EXPECTING US.
UH-HUH.
BIG TOP, EH? I GET IT.
WELL, I'M GOING TO GIVE MR. BIG TOP A BIG PIECE OF MY MIND AND--
GOLDBUG--
EH?
I BELIEVE THIS IS MR. BIG TOP.
WELL, WELL-- TRANSFORMERS! Y'KNOW, WE DON'T GET MANY OF YOUR KIND COMIN' TO THE CIRCUS!
WHATSAMATTER, A FEW MILLION YEARS OF CIVIL WAR TAKE ALL THE FUN OUTTA YOUSE GUYS?
A PLEASURE TO MEET YOUSE, ANYWAYS. BERKO, SEE THAT MY FRIENDS HAVE A GOOD TIME--
--I WANT THESE FELLAS TO GO BACK AND TELL ALL THEIR FRIENDS ABOUT OUR PLACE.
SPLOSH
SPLISH
YOU MAY CALL ME OPTIMUS PRIME, MR. TOP. AND THIS IS GOLDBUG.
YOU'RE HOLDING FOUR EARTH CHILDREN HERE AGAINST THEIR WILL. WE DEMAND THAT YOU RELEASE THEM INTO OUR CARE IMMEDIATELY.

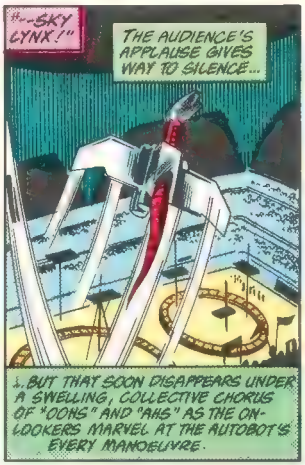

WHAT'S IT TO YOUSE? YOU SURE DON'T LOOK LIKE THEIR PARENTS.
I'M SURE YOU WOULD, OPPIE. BUT YOU MISUNDERSTAND THEIR SITUATION.
WE'LL SEE THEY GET HOME SAFELY.
CAN YOU READ THIS, BUGGO?
YES, IT'S IN BINARY CODE... IT'S A CONTRACT. SKY LYNX AND THE CHILDREN HAVE ALL SIGNED IT.
RIGHT. THE KIDS ARE HELPING YOUR COUSIN SKY WORK OFF A LITTLE DEBT. THAT'S ALL.
WHEN THE DEBT IS PAID, THEY'RE ALL FREE TO GO.
HERE. TAKE THESE PASSES. THEY'LL GET YOU THE BEST SEATS IN THE WHOLE JOINT.
ANY MORE PROBLEMS, JUST LET BERKO KNOW, OKAY?
OUR... THANKS, MR. TOP.
DON'T MENTION IT.
KEEP YOUR EYES ON 'EM. THEY CAUSE ANY MORE TROUBLE AND I'M HOLDING YOU RESPONSIBLE. AND YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS.
R-RIGHT, BIG TOP.
SOON, IN THE MAIN ARENA...
THE CONTRACT LOOKED LEGITIMATE, OPTIMUS. DO YOU THINK BIG TOP WAS TELLING THE TRUTH?
THIS SHOW IS JUST BEGINNING, GOLDBUG. THERE IS MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE HERE.

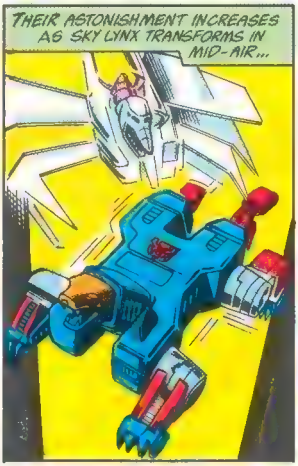
LADIES AND GENTLETHINGS, CREATURES OF ALL AGES! WELCOME TO THE GREATEST SHOW IN THE GALAXY--

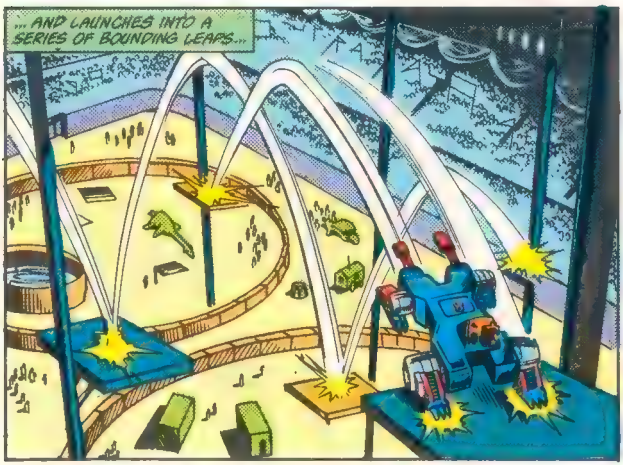

--THE COSMIC CARNIVAL!
MAY I DIRECT YOUR ATTENTION TO HIGH ABOVE THE CENTRE RING--

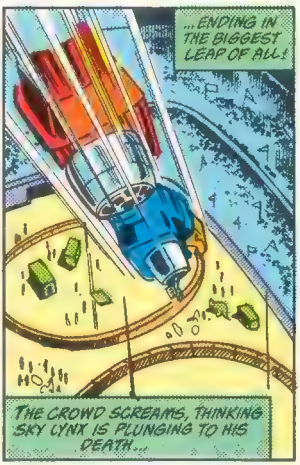

--TO THE STAR OF OUR SHOW--

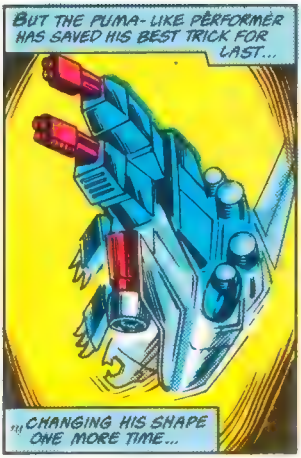
"--THAT METALLIC MASTER OF AERIAL ACROBATICS--

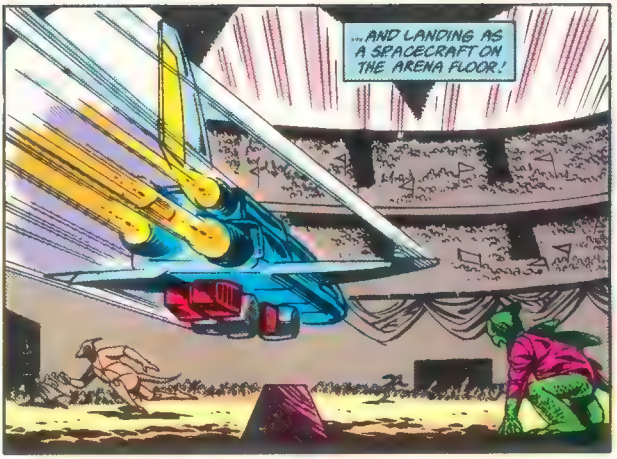

"--SKY LYNX!"
THE AUDIENCE'S APPLAUSE GIVES WAY TO SILENCE...
...BUT THAT SOON DISAPPEARS UNDER A SWELLING, COLLECTIVE CHORUS OF "OOHS" AND "AHS" AS THE ONLOOKERS MARVEL AT THE AUTOBOT'S EVERY MANOEUVRE.

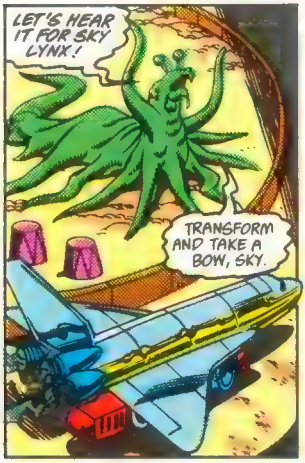

THEIR ASTONISHMENT INCREASES AS SKY LYNX TRANSFORMS IN MID-AIR...

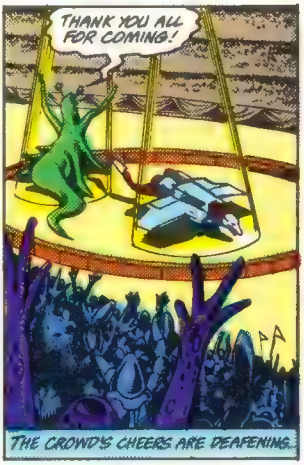

...AND LAUNCHES INTO A SERIES OF BOUNDING LEAPS...


...ENDING IN THE BIGGEST LEAP OF ALL!
THE CROWD SCREAMS, THINKING SKY LYNX IS PLUNGING TO HIS DEATH...

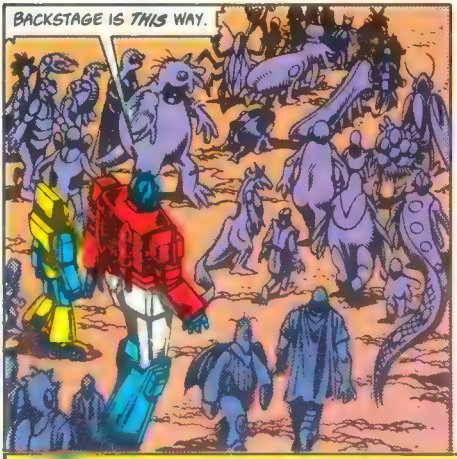

BUT THE PUMA-LIKE PERFORMER HAS SAVED HIS BEST TRICK FOR LAST...
...CHANGING HIS SHAPE ONE MORE TIME...

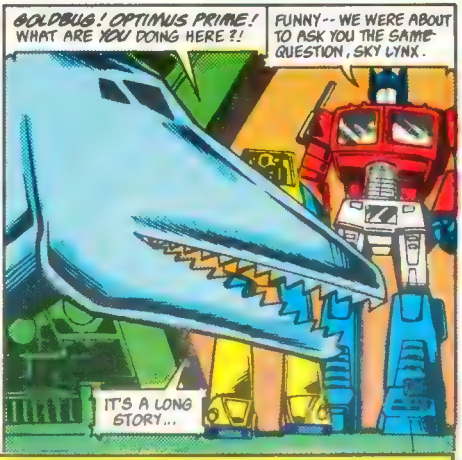

...AND LANDING AS A SPACECRAFT ON THE ARENA FLOOR!


LET'S HEAR IT FOR SKY LYNX!
TRANSFORM AND TAKE A BOW, SKY.


THANK YOU ALL FOR COMING!
THE CROWD'S CHEERS ARE DEAFENING.

...BUT NOT EVERYONE JOINS IN...
I WANT TO CONVEY MY APPRECIATION TO SKY LYNX PERSONALLY, GOLDBUG.


BACKSTAGE IS THIS WAY.


GOLDBUG! OPTIMUS PRIME! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
FUNNY -- WE WERE ABOUT TO ASK YOU THE SAME QUESTION, SKY LYNX.
IT'S A LONG STORY...

NEXT: RING FOR ACTION!

MARVEL
20th Aug.88
№179 35p
U.S.$1.45 CAN.$1.85
THE TRANSFORMERS™
and
ACTION FORCE™
YOUR MOUTHWASH AIN'T MAKING IT, LIZARD BREATH!

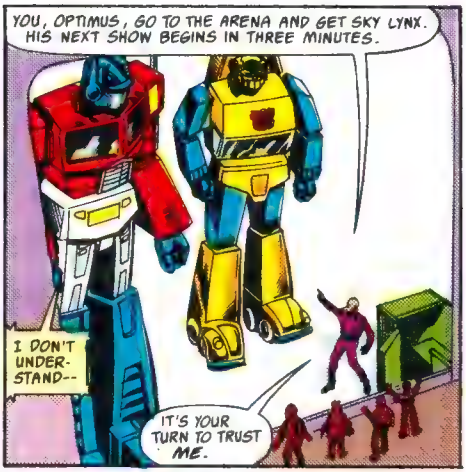
"... BUT I'M HAPPY TO TELL IT!
"AS A FAVOUR TO AN OLD AUTOBOT FRIEND, I WAS ON MY WAY TO EARTH TO DELIVER SOME VERY UNUSUAL CARGO--
"-- FOUR EARTH KIDS.*
"THESE MINI-HUMANS WERE HAVING THE TIME OF THEIR LIVES.
*SEE TRANSFORMERS #144.
"AND HAVING 'EM AROUND WAS A NICE BREAK FROM BASHING DECEPTICONS
"SO WHEN THIS AD FOR A COSMIC CARNIVAL FLASHED ABOARD...
"... AND THE KIDS ALL BEGGED ME TO TAKE 'EM...
"... I DIDN'T ARGUE
"WE ARRIVED HERE AND IT NEARLY BLEW OUR FUSES!
"WE ALL THOUGHT IT WAS GREAT!

"THAT'S WHEN BERKO SHOWED UP."
LOOK, FELLAS-- YOU HAVE TO PAY THE ADMISSION. OTHERWISE, TAKE A HIKE.
NO DOUGH, NO SHOW.
BUT WE JUST GOT HERE!
THAT'S NOT FAIR!
COULDN'T WE WORK OUT A DEAL, MR. BERKO?
DEAL? WHAT HAVE YOU GOT-- AQUILLIAN CRYSTALS?
NO.
GOLD INGOTS?
NO.
ENERGON CUBES?
NONE TO SPARE.
AHH-- THEN PERHAPS YOU COULD PAY WITH YOUR SERVICES... AS A PERFORMER. TEMPORARILY, OF COURSE.
"I AGREED AND SIGNED A CONTRACT.
"I WAS A BIG HIT ACT RIGHT AWAY.
"BERKO ASSURED ME THAT HE'D SEE TO THE KIDS' WELFARE.
"INSTEAD, HE PUT THEM TO WORK IN THE SIDESHOW. THEY BECAME EVEN A BIGGER HIT THAN I DID. Y'SEE, HUMANS, PARTICULARLY CHILDREN, ARE A RARITY IN THESE SPACE CIRCUSES.
"THEIR CAGE IS RIGGED TO BLOW UP IF ANYONE TRIES TO BREAK THEM OUT OF IT. ONLY BERKO CAN OPEN IT.
"BERKO KEEPS ASSURING ME THAT WE'LL WORK OFF OUR DEBT ANY DAY."
BUT I WONDER IF THAT DAY WILL EVER COME.
I WONDER, TOO.
I FEEL TERRIBLE THAT I GOT THESE KIDS INTO THIS MESS. HELP ME GET THEM OUT OF IT, OPTIMUS.

EXCUSE ME, FELLAS, BUT FOR YOU TWO THE SHOW IS OVER!
THE MANAGEMENT INVITES YOU TO LEAVE.
LET US TAKE THE CHILDREN OUT OF HERE AND WE'LL GLADLY GO, BERKO!
ARE YOUR WIRES LOOSE, DIESEL-BREATH? I HAVE A GOOD JOB HERE!
I'M NOT RISKING IT FOR THOSE BRATS!
THEN WE'LL SAY OUR FAREWELLS AND BE OFF.
SOON...
GOODBYE, CHILDREN. IT WAS NICE TO MEET YOU.
YOU'RE LEAVING US HERE?!
YOU CAN'T DO THAT!
WE WANT TO GO HOME!
WE WANT TO GO HOME TO OUR WORLD, TOO, CHILDREN.
BUT SOMETIMES YOU HAVE DUTIES ELSE-WHERE AND YOU CAN'T.
EXCEPT IN BERKO'S CASE -- HE CHOOSES NOT TO GO HOME. ISN'T THAT RIGHT?
EARTH NEVER DID ME ANY GOOD. WHY SHOULD I WANT TO GO BACK TO THAT DUST-BALL?!

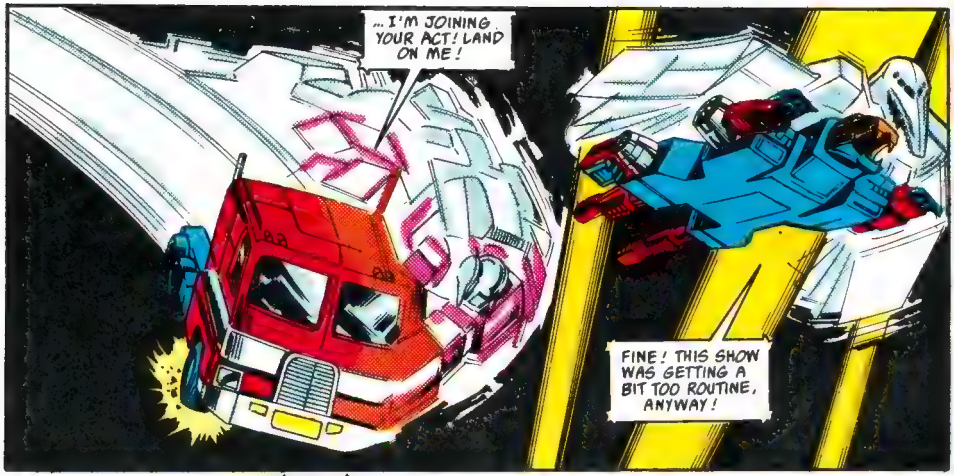
"I HAD NO FAMILY, NO FRIENDS. NO ONE EVER GAVE ME A JOB WORTH KEEPIN'! I WAS BROKE AND LIVING ALONE, WHICH SUITED ME JUST FINE!
"THEN ONE NIGHT A BEAM OF LIGHT HIT ME...
"...AND ZAPPED ME ABOARD THIS FLYING ROAD SHOW.
"AT FIRST I WAS JUST ANOTHER MISERABLE SIDESHOW FREAK IN A CAGE.
"BUT THEN I BEGAN COOPERATING. DOING TRICKS. BIG TOP APPRECIATED THAT.
"IN EXCHANGE FOR MY CONTINUING TO PERFORM, HE MADE ME A TRUSTEE.
"HE MADE ME BOSS OF THE SIDESHOW!"
WHEN WE SNAGGED THOSE KIDS, THEY TOOK MY PLACE IN THE CAGE.
AND AS LONG AS THEY'RE IN THERE, I DON'T HAVE TO BE!
THIS IS THE BEST DEAL ANYONE'S EVER CUT ME! AND I AIN'T GONNA BLOW IT FOR YOU OR ANYONE, BUCKET-HEAD! SO GET LOST!
I CAN TAKE YOU BACK TO EARTH, TOO.
W-WHAT?! M-ME?! BUT WHY WOULD YOU--
YOUR WORDS ARE EDGED WITH SADNESS. IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO DO SOMETHING MEANINGFUL WITH YOUR LIFE. TRUST ME.
I'VE ALWAYS MANAGED BY MYSELF. NO ONE'S EVER OFFERED TO HELP ME BEFORE...

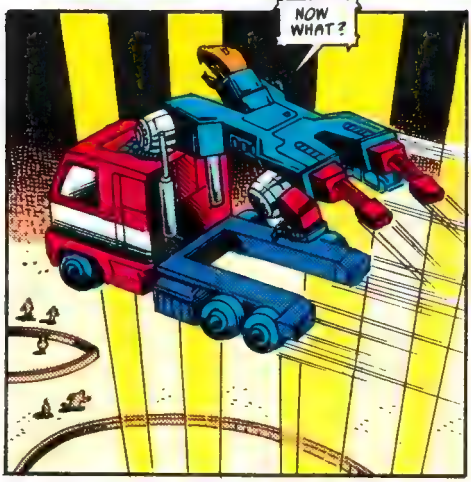
DON'T KNOCK IT TILL YOU TRY IT.
MAYBE... YOU'RE RIGHT.
GOLDBUG, YOU AND I WILL SEE TO THE KIDS.

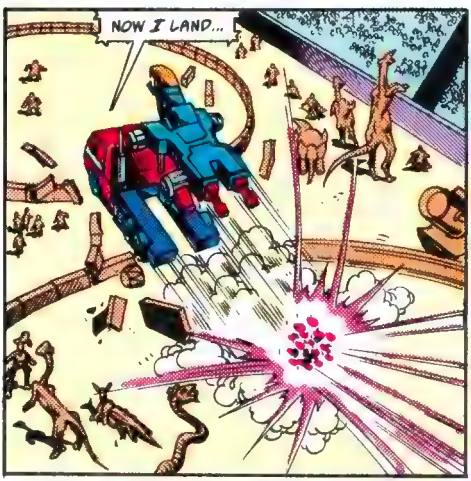

YOU, OPTIMUS, GO TO THE ARENA AND GET SKY LYNX. HIS NEXT SHOW BEGINS IN THREE MINUTES.
I DON'T UNDER-STAND--
IT'S YOUR TURN TO TRUST ME.

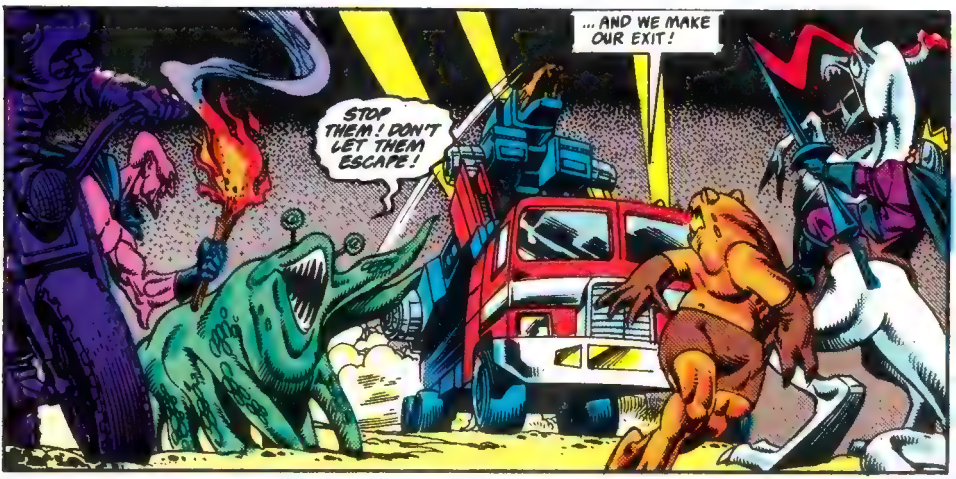
THREE MINUTES LATER...
LADIES AND GENTLETHINGS, CREATURES OF ALL AGES -- MAY I PRESENT THE AUTOMATED AIR-BORNE ARTISTE WITHOUT EQUAL--
THAT'S MY CUE...

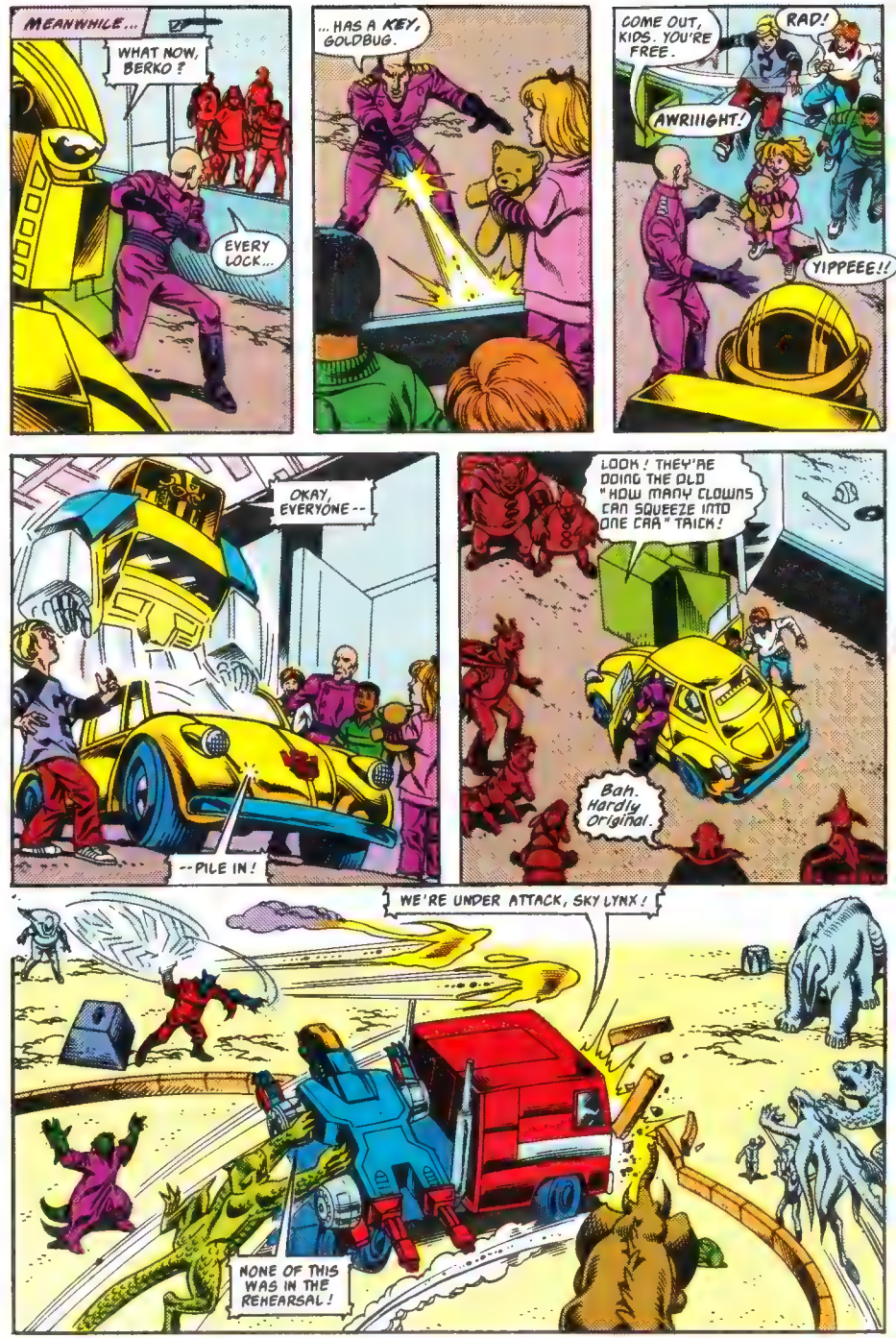
"--SKY LYNX!"
OPTIMUS PRIME! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!
YOU KEEP ASKING THE SAME QUESTION. THE ANSWER IS...

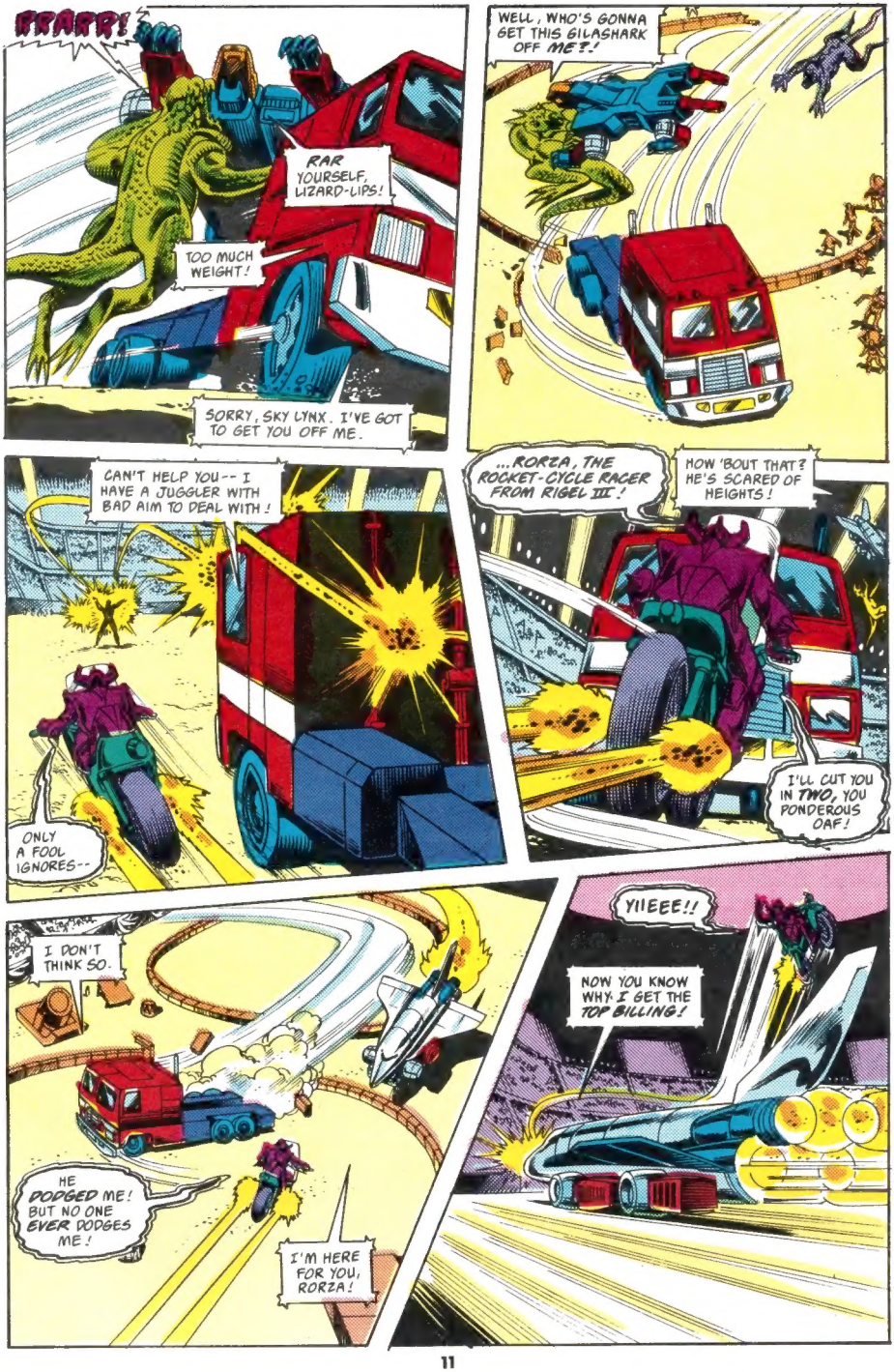

...I'M JOINING YOUR ACT! LAND ON ME!
FINE! THIS SHOW WAS GETTING A BIT TOO ROUTINE, ANYWAY!

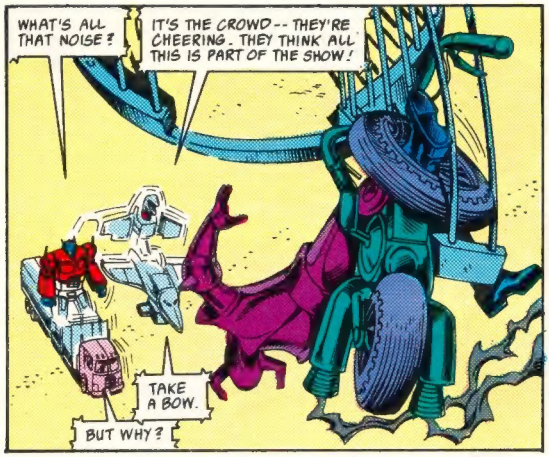

NOW WHAT?

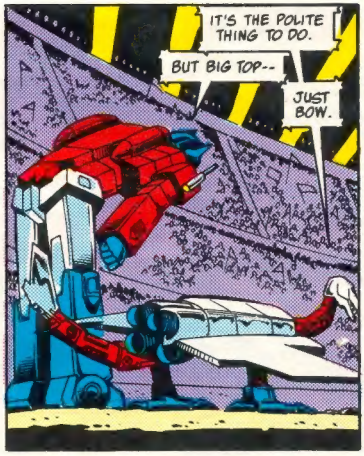

NOW I LAND...


...AND WE MAKE OUR EXIT!
STOP THEM! DON'T LET THEM ESCAPE!

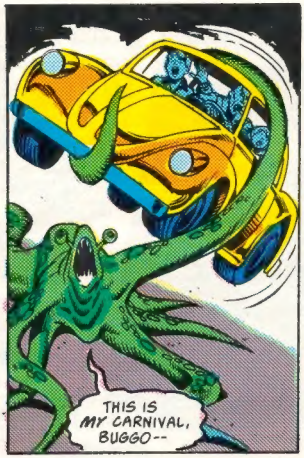

MEANWHILE...
WHAT NOW, BERKO?
EVERY LOCK...
...HAS A KEY, GOLDBUG.
COME OUT, KIDS. YOU'RE FREE.
RAD!
AWRIIIGHT!
YIPPEEE!!
OKAY, EVERYONE--
--PILE IN!
LOOK! THEY'RE DOING THE OLD "HOW MANY CLOWNS CAN SQUEEZE INTO ONE CAR" TRICK!
Bah. Hardly original.
WE'RE UNDER ATTACK, SKY LYNX!
NONE OF THIS WAS IN THE REHEARSAL!

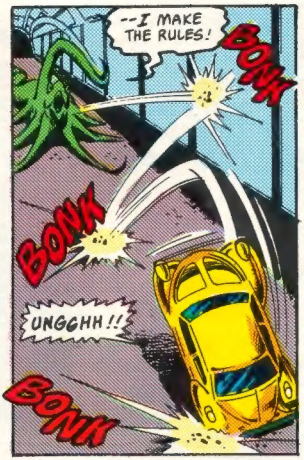

FRARR!
RAR YOURSELF, LIZARD-LIPS!
TOO MUCH WEIGHT!
SORRY, SKY LYNX. I'VE GOT TO GET YOU OFF ME.
WELL, WHO'S GONNA GET THIS GILASHARK OFF ME?!
CAN'T HELP YOU-- I HAVE A JUGGLER WITH BAD AIM TO DEAL WITH!
ONLY A FOOL IGNORES--
...RORZA, THE ROCKET-CYCLE RACER FROM RIGEL III!
HOW 'BOUT THAT? HE'S SCARED OF HEIGHTS!
I'LL CUT YOU IN TWO, YOU PONDEROUS OAF!
I DON'T THINK SO.
HE DODGED ME! BUT NO ONE EVER DODGES ME!
I'M HERE FOR YOU, RORZA!
YIIEEE!!
NOW YOU KNOW WHY I GET THE TOP BILLING!


WHAT'S ALL THAT NOISE?
IT'S THE CROWD -- THEY'RE CHEERING. THEY THINK ALL THIS IS PART OF THE SHOW!
TAKE A BOW.
BUT WHY?

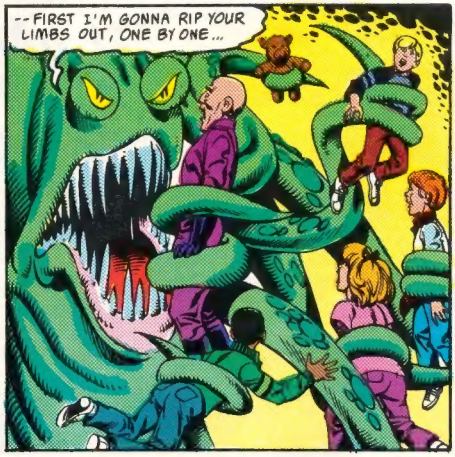

IT'S THE POLITE THING TO DO.
BUT BIG TOP--
JUST BOW.

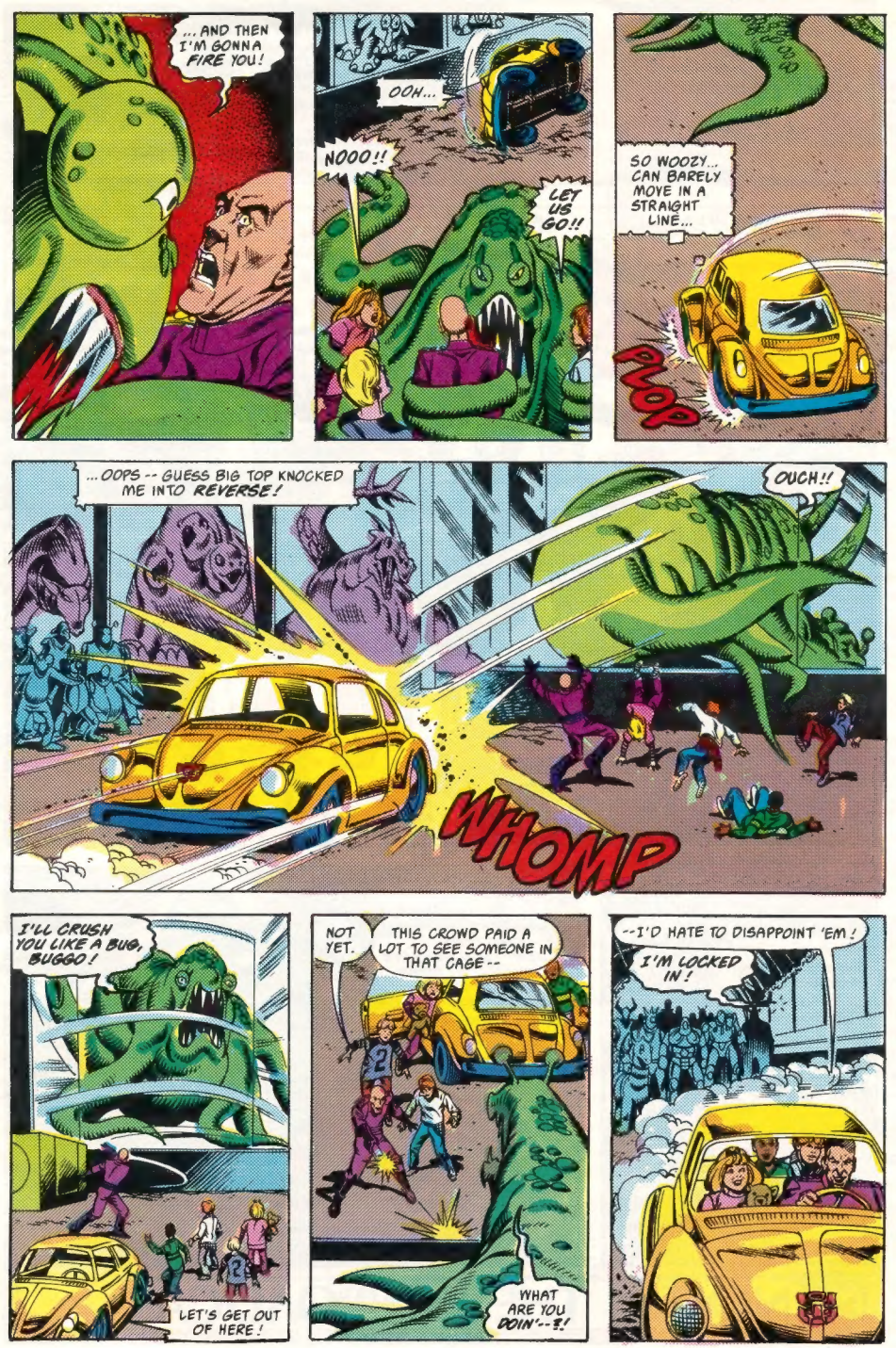
THAT'S MY VALUABLE PROPERTY YOU GOT IN THERE, BUGGO!
BIG TOP!
I'M DECLARING THEIR CONTRACT NULL AND VOID!

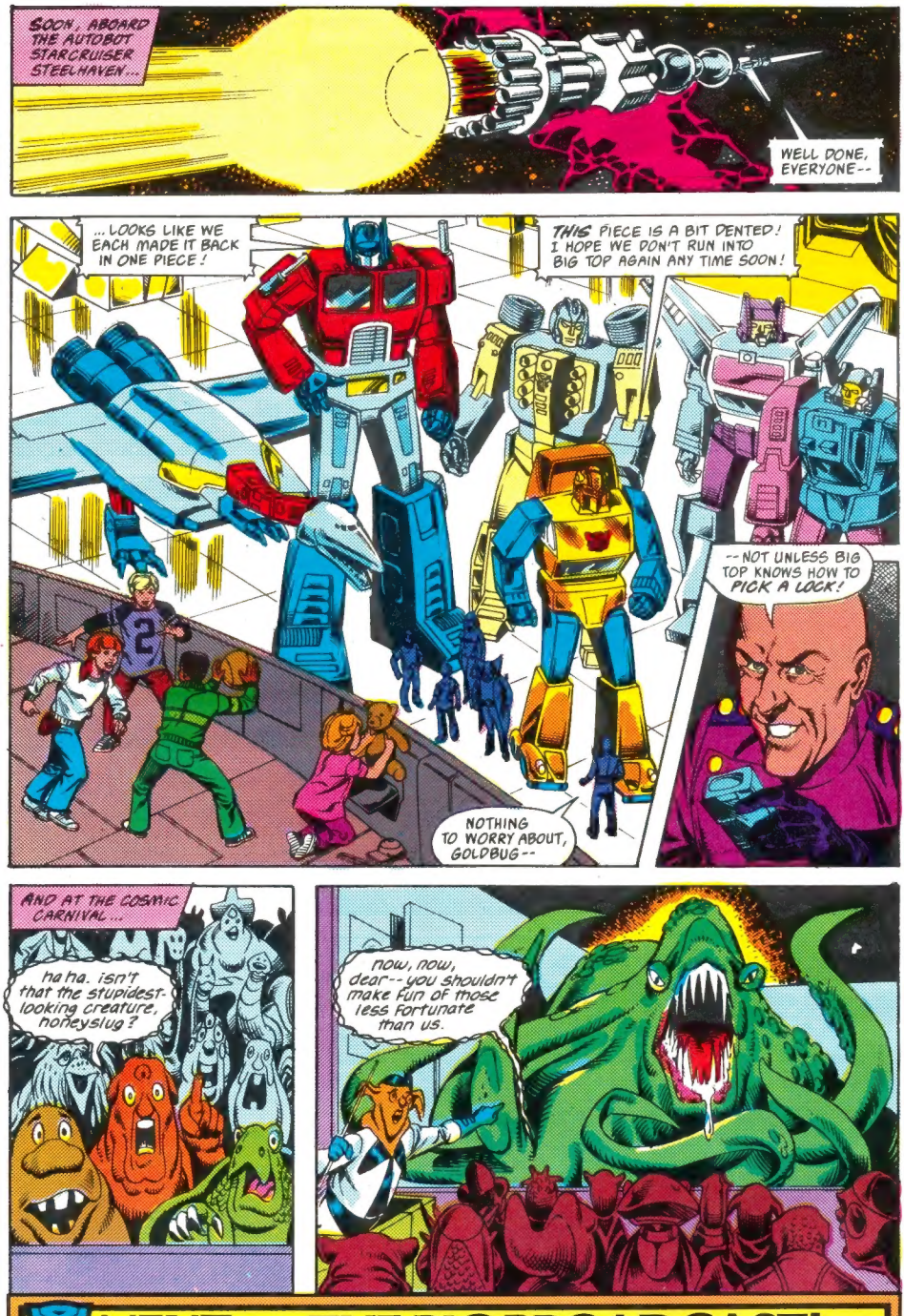

THIS IS MY CARNIVAL, BUGGO--


--I MAKE THE RULES!
BONK
BONK
UNGGHH!!
BONK

BERKO! SO THIS IS WHAT I GET FOR PUTTIN' YOU ON THE PAYROLL!
ONLY BECAUSE IT SUITED YOUR NEEDS, BIG TOP --NOT MINE!
WELL, I GOT A BONUS FOR YOUR GOOD WORK--


--FIRST I'M GONNA RIP YOUR LIMBS OUT, ONE BY ONE...


...AND THEN I'M GONNA FIRE YOU!
OOH...
NOOO!!
LET US GO!!
SO WOOZY... CAN BARELY MOVE IN A STRAIGHT LINE...
PLOP
...OOPS -- GUESS BIG TOP KNOCKED ME INTO REVERSE!
OUCH!!
WHOMP
I'LL CRUSH YOU LIKE A BUG, BUGGO!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
NOT YET.
THIS CROWD PAID A LOT TO SEE SOMEONE IN THAT CAGE--
WHAT ARE YOU DOIN'--?!
--I'D HATE TO DISAPPOINT 'EM!
I'M LOCKED IN!


SOON, ABOARD THE AUTOBOT STARCRUISER STEELHAVEN...
WELL DONE, EVERYONE--
...LOOKS LIKE WE EACH MADE IT BACK IN ONE PIECE!
THIS PIECE IS A BIT DENTED! I HOPE WE DON'T RUN INTO BIG TOP AGAIN ANY TIME SOON!
--NOT UNLESS BIG TOP KNOWS HOW TO PICK A LOCK!
NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT, GOLDBUG--
AND AT THE COSMIC CARNIVAL...
ha ha. isn't that the stupidest-looking creature, honeyslug?
now, now, dear--you shouldn't make fun of those less fortunate than us.
NEXT: THE BIG BROADCAST!